

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DODE-00 SS-15 INR-07 CIAE-00 PM-04
TRSE-00 OMB-01 IO-13 EB-07 L-03 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 NSC-05
/076 R

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APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:HAHOLMES
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EUR/WE:MR. MCKINLEY

----- 087831 /71L

R 220013Z DEC 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME
INFO USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 308808

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, NATO, IT

SUBJECT: NATO INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION- ITALIAN FUNDING

REF: A. USNATO 6852, B. ROME 20368, C. USNATO 6747

1. AS WE UNDERSTAND EMBASSY COUNTERPROPOSAL IN PARA 4
OF REF B, DEMARCHE TO GOI WOULD NOT OCCUR UNTIL AFTER
NATO INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING IS HELD IN ROME. AT THAT
TIME, DEMARCHE WOULD COVER INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION,
ITALY'S ROLE IN AEW, AND MAJOR EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT.

2. WE HAVE TWO DIFFICULTIES WITH EMBASSY PROPOSAL:

A. CURRENTLY, THERE IS NO FIXED SCHEDULE FOR THE IN-
TELLIGENCE BRIEFING, AND IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT IT MAY
NOT BE PRESENTED IN ROME FOR SOME TIME. TO AWAIT SUCH
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AN UNCERTAIN DATE WOULD NOT BE IN KEEPING WITH URGENT
NEED FOR AN INFRASTRUCTURE FUND AUGMENTATION, AS ARTI-
CULATED BY SEC GEN, MILITARY COMMITTEE, SECDEF AND OTHERS
AT DEC 7, 1976 DPC MINISTERIAL. ITALY IS NOW THE MAIN
OBSTACLE TO A NATO CONSENSUS ON INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE
FUNDING. REF C AND DPC/D(76)28 (REVISED) PROVIDE DE-

TAILS ON NEED FOR ACTION NOW.

B. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD NOT BE USEFUL TO APPROACH ITALY

SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH US PROPOSALS ON INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION, INCREASED ITALIAN ROLE IN AWACS, AND EARLY PASSAGE OF MAJOR EQUIPMENT PROCUREMENT LEGISLATION. THESE THREE PROGRAMS ENTAIL SEPARATE ISSUES AND PRIORITIES, AND HAVE DIFFERENT TIME SCHEDULES. IF WE ATTEMPT TO CONSOLIDATE THESE ISSUES, THE LIKELIHOOD IS THAT LITTLE MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED.

3. CURRENT STATUS OF NATO INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION IS THAT DEFENSE MINISTERS HAVE REQUESTED THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATION OF THE DETAILS AND REPORT TO DPC PERM REPS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THIS MEANS THAT THIS ITEM WILL BE CONSIDERED WHEN THE INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE RESUMES MEETINGS IN JANUARY. IT IS APPARENT THAT, WITHOUT FIRM INSTRUCTIONS FROM ROME, THE ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE WILL CONTINUE TO ARGUE THAT CONDITIONS DO NOT ALLOW ITALY TO ACCEPT A NEW FINANCIAL BURDEN, AND THAT THE PRESENT COST SHARING FORMULA SHOULD BE RECONSIDERED.

4. IF THERE IS ANY CERTAIN WAY TO STALEMATE THE PROGRAM FOR INCREASED INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING, IT IS TO FOLLOW THE ARGUMENTS EXPRESSED THUS FAR BY THE ITALIANS. WE SHOULD COUNTER THESE ARGUMENTS BY POINTING OUT THAT WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FUNDS:

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--WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMPLETE PLANS FOR A MODERN SURVIVABLE COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM;

--WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ADEQUATELY PROTECT OUR NUCLEAR FACILITIES;

--WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE ESSENTIAL IMPROVEMENTS IN THE POSTURE OF CONVENTIONAL FORCES; AND,

--THE PRESENT SLOW RATE OF IMPLEMENTING OUR AIRCRAFT SHELTER PROGRAM WILL PROBABLY BE FURTHER RETARDED.

WE KNOW THAT UNLESS WE TAKE ACTION, FORCE PLAN APPROVAL BY THE DPC WILL NOT BE CARRIED OUT FOR LACK OF FUNDS BEFORE 1980 OR LATER - OR NOT AT ALL. DECISIONS TO TAKE ACTION RING HOLLOW IF WE DO NOT APPLY THE RESOURCES NEEDED TO TAKE CORRECTIVE ACTION. OUR INVESTMENTS IN FORCE MODERNIZATION WILL BE LESS EFFECTIVE

IF WE FAIL TO PROVIDE THE FACILITIES AND COMMON SYSTEMS
TO SUPPORT THEM.

5. IF THE ITALIANS SHOULD QUESTION THE NEED FOR THE
US SPECIAL PROGRAM, OR SUGGEST REVISING NATIONAL COST
SHARES, YOU SHOULD DRAW ON STATEMENT MADE BY SECDEF
AT DECEMBER DPC MINISTERIAL (REF C).

6. YOU SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT BENEFITS ITALY DRAWS FROM
INFRASTRUCTURE EXCEED HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROGRAM,
AND THIS FAVORABLE COST/BENEFIT RATIO CAN BE EXPECTED
TO CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

7. WE LEAVE TO THE JUDGMENT OF THE EMBASSY PRECISE
TIMING OF THIS DEMARCHE. IN OUR VIEW, HOWEVER, THE
SOONER THE BETTER.
KISSINGER

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PAGE 01 STATE 008808
ORIGIN OC-06

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 ISO-00 FSE-00 /007 R

DRAFTED BY OC/EX: FJHUGHES:PH
APPROVED BY A/OC: WENAEHER
OC/EX:TJFITZPATRICK
-----141822Z 042865 /54

R 141420Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMCONSUL KARACHI
USOFFICE RFC PARIS

UNCLAS STATE 008808

KARACHI FOR RCO

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:ACOM

SUBJECT: CEO DEBNAR OVERTIME

REF: ISTANBUL 0087

CHARGE DEBNAR'S 31 HOURS OVERTIME (DOLS 301.32) TO:
1960113-2026-600100-POST CODE-1131.
KISSINGER

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DEMARCHE, FUND ALLOTMENT, MILITARY BASES, REGIONAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE308808
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/RPM/REHFELD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760469-0246
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761220/aaaaaqxn.tel
Line Count: 173
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 ROME 20368
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NATO INFRASTRUCTURE AUGMENTATION- ITALIAN FUNDING
TAGS: MPOL, MARR, IT, US, NATO
To: ROME
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006